

FALL 2018

# MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER NEWSLETTER



# Director's Corner

Everyone who has spent time on Skyland Hill has loved the connections made through the organic flow of rich conversation.

We remember, with great fondness and detail, summertime talks with cabin friends and camp counselors that happened years (maybe decades!) ago. Who would have known then, that those conversations would become such an integral part of our Skyland memories? Those conversations wend their way through so many of our experiences at Skyland. We saw that at Skyland's Centennial Celebration ... individual stories and memories weave together to create a magical memory tapestry.

Bunny Brown recently shared that she still remembers, in detail, some of the conversations she had with Granny Harris. In 1943, as a nine-year-old camper, Bunny and a group of her friends sat every week with Granny snapping beans as they listened to her stories and answered fun questions she asked them. In particular, Bunny remembers how Granny advised the girls on the importance of friendship at camp –how they all needed to “be a good friend to have a good friend”. That conversation, which happened over 75 years ago, is still fresh in Bunny's mind and is one she has relayed to many campers ever since.

While many young people today have countless social media friends, studies show they are lonelier and have weaker social skills than young people in all previous generations. Their ability to read facial cues, have empathy, and interact with others in a natural way has waned.

But not at Skyland!! Skyland alumnae are successful in their school and working worlds BECAUSE of the connection, conversation, and communication that happens during an electronics-free summer camp experience. Camp conversations help girls learn to use their voice with confidence, listen to others with interest, and show empathy and support to friends.

Has your life been changed because of a conversation or connection at Skyland? If so, we'd love to know.

Call, mail, fax, email, or social media us your #BecauseOfSkyland story. We'd love to hear it, share it and celebrate all that Skyland has been over the decades.

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--Sherry Brown  
Executive Director

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# What We Are Learning

## "The Flight from Conversation"

## Review of article by Sherry Turkle

In our work at Skyland, we are fortunate to have access to a variety of learning opportunities; from books and conferences to youth development specialists to outdoor education experts. Recently, we enjoyed reading the 2012 NY Times article titled "The Flight from Conversation" by Sherry Turkle. The article's focus fits beautifully with our newsletter theme (Conversation), and has a powerful message for all of us in how we choose to communicate and connect with others.

In "The Flight from Conversation", author Sherry Turkle discusses society's increasing reliance on technology to communicate, and the resulting shift from true conversation to a simple connection. We use technology to look up facts, send information, chat, or confirm appointments. Any perceived connection is not based on learning something about each other but is built on blips of text or photos which are very limited in scope. Additionally, there is an increased ability and desire to edit the version of us that we present to the world. We have the power to edit our looks, voices, and experiences, and if we don't like something about ourselves, we can hit "delete". As Turkle states, "Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology." Conversation, as opposed to such superficial connecting, takes time. It takes patience. It takes listening and being heard. Conversation with others is where we learn to not only listen, but to decipher what we are hearing along with facial expressions and body language, and turn that information into a real connection. Technology allows us to skip all that effort and skim the surface. We can't hear the sarcasm in a text, any more than we can hear joy or frustration. We don't even have to pay attention when texting. We can do multiple tasks and pick up the conversation later when we're alone again. More and more, technology is providing an escape from ever needing to be alone.

With instant access to others through technology, we are losing the ability for self-reflection and being comfortable in our own presence without distractions. Young people are so constantly connected through electronics that they are missing out on the opportunity to experience being alone and learning to be comfortable with it. Turkle reminds us that "If we don't teach our children to be alone, they will only know how to be lonely." In our technology-focused world, it is common for us to share experiences such as a steaming cup of hot cocoa on a cold morning, or a brilliant, crimson sunset by sending photos through Instagram, Facebook or Snapchat. Whereas before, we would have turned to someone with us and connected through the shared moment and our experiences of it. We have mistakenly looked at using technology in this way as connecting, but it's not.

In our summers at Skyland, we purposely build in opportunities for time alone as well as time to connect with others. One way we set the stage for true connection is to eliminate electronics at camp. Then, we make time each day for self-reflection (rest hour and bedtime rituals) and group connection across ages and living groups (clubhouse and mealtimes). We intentionally provide spaces to allow girls and staff to relax and connect with one another, such as the porches, Adirondack chairs scattered throughout camp, or our favorite tree swing! The conversations and connections girls have at Skyland become the threads that connect them to each other, to the staff, to the camp, and to the generations of girls that came before them. Skyland is a place for girls to connect not only with others but with themselves; their real and unique selves.

# Alumna Spotlight: Patty Johnson

Patty was a Skyland Camp counselor for many years, and her legacy spans generations. When alumnae hear her name, many stories follow.

Some of Patty's earliest campers (now alumnae!) remember her because of the scary ghost stories she told. Some alumnae remember her archery skills and report learning how to use a bow and arrow under her direction as an archery counselor. Other alumnae recall, with great love and fondness, her beautiful voice singing along as she played her guitar. And recent alumnae recognize her name from the book she wrote for Skyland's Centennial Celebration: *In the Land of The Sky: Celebrating 100 Years of Skyland Camp for Girls*.

Regardless of how most remember Patty, there is always one theme. She is a brilliant connector! We wanted to get to know Patty even BETTER, so we took a recent opportunity to sit down and have some conversation.



## **How did you first learn about Skyland?**

In 1975 there was an ad in the Charlotte Observer. The ad was for an Archery Counselor and a Hiking Counselor at Skyland Camp for Girls. My dad was a bow hunter but I liked target shooting better. While I'd never taught archery or worked with young children, I loved working with teens, and I knew how to shoot so I applied and was hired.

## **What was your work outside of Skyland?**

My undergraduate degree is in English Literature with a teaching certification, and my graduate degree is in Counseling. I retired in 2014 after 30 years as a school counselor with Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system.

## **What is your favorite Skyland food?**

Shepherd's Pie! It was always served at Monday dinner. (and if you were able to get some Italian dressing to drizzle over the top, it was simply divine!!)



Beth Clifford and Patty Johnson at the Skyland Centennial 2017

## **What does Skyland represent to you?**

When I was in the school system, Skyland was my home away from home. It really has been a second home to me. I quickly discovered that I fit in better at Skyland than I did anywhere else.

## **How did Skyland influence you in other ways?**

Two ways. It was a place where I learned that problems don't necessarily mean drama. If something breaks, I learned how to fix it. There was no drama over problems – we just resolved them at Skyland.

Skyland also led me to my career. I was moving toward a teaching degree but wasn't really excited about student teaching. A colleague knew that I loved working at Skyland, and recommended I consider working as a counselor where I could work with individuals in small groups, as well as one on one. I loved it. My 30-year career as a school counselor can be credited to that ad I answered in 1975.

## **What was your favorite Skyland outing?**

I really liked going to Pisgah Forest. I liked the whole thing, especially how the Upper Cove made us feel like we were so isolated. It was wonderful. I had never camped at home, so this was a real treat.

**What about your book on Skyland's history?**

I've always been interested in the history of Skyland. One of my biggest regrets is not spending more time with Hempy and Frances during my first few years at Skyland back in the 70s. I'll bet their stories of "Skyland's beginning" would have been wonderful.

As Skyland's Centennial Celebration was being planned, a Skyland colleague said, "you should write a book." And so I did. With the help of fellow Skylanders, many interviews, Hempy's original photo album, public archives, and loads of research, the book came together. It's called *In The Land Of The Skyland - Celebrating 100 Years of Skyland Camp for Girls*, and is available for purchase by contacting Skyland's general email at mailbox@skylandcamp .com.

It's loaded with great old photographs, and the history of the actual hotel that was built in 1898 (now Skyland's Main Lodge/Big House). The book chronicles the opening of the hotel in 1898, Skyland's launch in 1917, Granny's auction purchase in 1920, all the way up to Bunny's introduction to Skyland in 1943.

The greatest find in my research was locating the auction bill that had been advertised in the Asheville Citizen newspaper in 1920. The auction was planned to be a huge social event, complete with entertainment, souvenirs and more. The property was to be divided into parcels and sold. As the story goes, Granny was present at that auction and placed the winning bid for "the whole kit and caboodle." And the rest, they say, is history. We're already working on Volume 2, and will be interviewing more alumnae for that book.



Patty currently serves as Skyland's primary historian and supports Skyland summer operations in a variety of ways from dishwashing to substitute archery instructor, and from office support to an on-site counselor (in between her research and archive work). She attends Memorial Day Alumnae Volunteer Work Weekends where she can be found planting flowers, painting, working in the kitchen or sharing stories and songs around the campfire. *To read the full interview with Patty Johnson, visit [SkylandCamp.com/Alumna-Spotlight-PJ](http://SkylandCamp.com/Alumna-Spotlight-PJ).*

2019

# SAVE THE DATE

**ALUMNAE VOLUNTEER  
WORK WEEKEND**  
MAY 24 - 27

Join us for volunteer work weekend to ready Skyland for the summer. Reconnect with fellow alumnae. Guests (21+) are welcome!

[skylandcamp.com/alumnae-volunteer-work-weekend/](http://skylandcamp.com/alumnae-volunteer-work-weekend/)

**MOTHER-DAUGHTER  
WEEKEND**  
June 7 - 9

This popular weekend of mother-daughter bonding and trying out camp is ideal for moms and their K-6th grade daughters.

[skylandcamp.com/mother-daughter-weekend/](http://skylandcamp.com/mother-daughter-weekend/)

**TRADITIONAL AND  
STARTER CAMP SESSIONS**

Session 1: June 23 - July 12  
Session 2: July 14 - August 2  
Skyland's traditional summer camp sessions are for girls entering K - 10th grades.

[skylandcamp.com/dates-and-rates/](http://skylandcamp.com/dates-and-rates/)

# #CampTShirtDay Photo Contest

November 13, 2018

Camp T-Shirt Day is a special day for the international camp community to celebrate camp and show some serious camp spirit. This year, Skyland represented in a BIG way by posting and sharing photos using #CampTShirtDay! Seven lucky winners won their very own #CampTShirt which will also be for sale later this summer in Skyland's store. Congratulations to the year's winners: Lil Eubanks, Leigh Anne Eubanks, Dianna Fischer, Jen Byrum, Katie and Susan Chase, and Sydney Wertz!



# Alumnae Updates

## Alumnae Updates from Skyland

When my daughter, Heather, was old enough to go to camp I so wanted her to go to Skyland Camp where I had gone and where I had many memorable times. There were no computers to speak of at the time so I began trying to find the Camp any way I could. I thought it was Skyland Camp, Skyland, NC (I never remembered or thought of Clyde, NC). I searched for a long long time, got nowhere and finally gave up. I was really sad and upset.

Later, we were living in Nassau Bay, outside of Houston. One day I pulled into the grocery parking lot and the truck next to me said Skyland Camp, Clyde, NC. I was shocked! Talk about a miracle. I stayed right there and waited for the owner to come out. And guess who owned the truck??? Bunny Brown! I guess you can guess the rest of the story but my daughter sure went to Skyland Camp that Summer and others. And my Granddaughter, Juliet went there also. Not to mention my sister Carlisle Gaines (we were there in the 40s with Christine (Chrissy) Hayward

**Maud Gaines Tarrant '40's**

P. S. I love Skyland Camp

Staff Alumna, **Laura Nevill '15-'16 & '18**, began work as a Financial Analyst at Frito-Lay Headquarters in Dallas, Texas, after graduating from the University of Georgia this past May. She tells us she is honing her data analytics and presentation skills, as well as enjoying all the chips! In her free time, Laura is volunteering at ManeGait, a therapeutic riding program for individuals with disabilities, and training her Australian Shepherd in Agility and Obedience.

Zulu also took part in #CampTShirtDay!



I married back in Maryland and moved to the Seattle area in 1991 and have stayed ever since. I have family out here, and have since had three sons who are all now grown and loving the Pacific Northwest. No daughters, though, to send to Skyland.

**Jeremy Cutler '77 - '78**



It has been 53 years since I was the Drama Counselor at Skyland!! I still remember all of it so fondly. I made many wonderful friends there, including Joan, Fran, and Nina. We are each getting 'older' now but those summer of '64 memories will always have a warm place in my heart.

I have grandchildren now and am retired as a high school Drama teacher. I have written many plays which have been produced mainly by community theatres and churches. I am still writing and am still very active. Would love to hear from all who were at Skyland during those long-ago years.

**Tina Collins-Eib '66**

SINCE 1917  
**SKYLAND CAMP FOR GIRLS**

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conversation...one experience...one  
camper at a time

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SUMMER 2019**

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